

LATAs (local access and transport areas) were created after the breakup of AT&T in the 1980s to mark the boundaries within which the former Bell companies like Qwest could transport long-distance calls. Montana is divided into two main LATAs, which roughly divide the state in half from northeast to southwest. The northwest corner of the state, including the Libby, Eureka and Troy area, is in a third LATA (960), which also includes the Idaho Panhandle.

Long-distance calls that originate and terminate in the same LATA are considered intraLATA calls while calls placed between LATAs are interLATA calls. Calls to another state are interstate interLATA calls. For example, a call from Helena to Missoula is considered an intraLATA call while a call from Helena to Billings or Helena to Chicago is an interLATA call.

Consumers select their intraLATA carrier just as they select their interLATA carrier.

Long distance companies often have different rates for intraLATA, intrastate interLATA, and inter-state calls. When you see an AT&T or MCI plan on television at 7 cents/minute or 5 cents/minute, most often these prices are for state-to-state calls. Consumers need to be aware of different long distance calling areas (InterLATA and IntraLATA) in order to ask the “right” questions regarding any plan they are considering switching to.

LATA MAP:

